United Nations A/71/827

General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 March 2017

Original: English

Seventy-first session
Agenda items 134, 13 and 117

Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.58

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/71/19) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.58 on the modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, which responds to General Assembly resolution 71/1 entitled "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants", which launched the process of intergovernmental negotiations for the adoption, at an intergovernmental conference to be held in 2018, of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. The statement was submitted in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly. During its consideration of the statement, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarifications, concluding with responses received on 24 February 2017.

2. Under the terms of draft resolution A/71/L.58, the General Assembly would: (a) decide to hold an intergovernmental conference to adopt a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration; (b) request the Secretary-General to appoint a Secretary-General of the Conference to act as a focal point on behalf of the United Nations system for providing support to the preparatory process and to the organization of the conference; (c) request the Secretary-General to prepare a note on the organization of work of the intergovernmental conference that will serve as

Please recycle

the basis for the precise modalities of the intergovernmental conference to be decided by Member States by January 2018; and (d) request the President of the General Assembly, with the support of the Secretary-General and drawing upon the expertise of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other members of the Global Migration Group and other relevant entities, to organize a series of informal thematic sessions on facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration to be held between April 2017 and November 2017. The terms of the draft resolution also include, inter alia, requests for the regional economic commissions to organize discussions among Member States and other relevant stakeholders to examine regional and subregional aspects of international migration. In addition, the Secretary-General is requested to present a report on the full range of inputs and to provide Member States with recommendations before the beginning of the phase of intergovernmental negotiations, which will take place in 2018 (A/71/L.58).

II. Resource requirements

3. The Secretary-General indicates that the request would entail additional resource requirements for a total of $1,244,700 for 2017 under the programme budget for the 2016-2017 biennium and $442,000 for 2018. The activities for the preparatory process, as indicated in the draft resolution, for the 18-month period leading up to the intergovernmental conference are indicated in detail in the statement of the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications. The requested activities would entail additional resource requirements for the following sections of the programme budget for the 2016-2017 biennium and the proposed programme budget for the 2018-2019 biennium: section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination; section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; section 9, Economic and social affairs; section 16, International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice; section 18, Economic and social development in Africa; section 19, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific; section 21, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean; section 22, Economic and social development in Western Asia; section 24, Human rights; section 28, Public information; and section 29G, Administration, Vienna.

4. The statement indicates that additional conference-servicing resource requirements of a one-time nature in the amounts of $632,100 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and $28,400 under section 29G, Administration, Vienna, would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 and the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 to implement the additional workload (see A/C.5/71/19, para. 22). The statement also indicates that it is not possible to identify activities within the relevant sections of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium and therefore it would be necessary that the requested total resources of $1,244,700, comprising conference-servicing and non-conference-servicing requirements, be provided through an additional appropriation representing a charge against the contingency fund for 2016-2017 and that the amount of $442,000 for 2018 be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 (see A/C.5/71/19, paras. 61, 64 and 65). In this context, the Advisory Committee will revert with regard to the resource requirements for 2018 in the context of its consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

Consultants

5. The statement indicates that consultancy requirements in the amount of $223,700 are required to conduct research and analysis on migration issues, including the themes identified in the draft resolution. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the regional economic commissions are requested to organize discussions among Member States and other relevant stakeholders in order to examine regional and subregional aspects of migration. As a result, consultants are required to draft the necessary background papers. The Committee was further informed, upon enquiry, that the required migration expertise does not exist within the regional economic commissions. Further, while acknowledging that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime have significant mandates and expertise regarding mobility, it was indicated that consultants are required to help cope with the surge in demands resulting from the draft resolution and to ensure that other mandated activities are not neglected.

6. Upon enquiry as to the role of IOM in the provision of technical and policy expertise, the Committee was informed that, although that organization will be supporting the processes, its offices will be occupied in organizing the IOM regional consultation processes, which includes working with the regional economic commissions (the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)) in planning regional discussions with other agencies within the Global Migration Group (see also paras. 8 and 9 below). **In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes that the report of the Secretary-General contains no information with regard to the consultations to be undertaken with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). The Advisory Committee is of the view that information relating to the role of IOM with regard to ECE should be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.58 (see also para. 20 below).**

7. With regard to the request in the amount of $54,000 for consultancy services for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Department has a long history of conducting research in the field of international migration and that it has served intergovernmental processes on migration and development at the United Nations by providing secretariat support to informal consultations and by drafting reports of the Secretary-General to inform the consultations and the official sessions of the Commission on Population and Development and of the General Assembly. The Committee was also informed that the Department possesses broad-based expertise in matters pertaining to international migration and well-established connections to the scientific community and collaboration with members of the Global Migration Group. **The Advisory Committee considers that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should make full use of its in-house capacity and place less reliance on external consultants to support the preparatory process leading to the intergovernmental conference. The Committee, therefore, recommends that a reduction of 15 per cent in the amount of $8,100 be applied to that Department's proposed consultancy requirements.**

8. **The Advisory Committee notes that the process leading up to the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration requires inputs from a number of actors. The Committee is of the view that the explanations provided do not fully explain the scope, nature and requirement for the proposed consultants.**

The Committee encourages the Secretary-General to draw upon existing capacity within the Secretariat and leverage the comparative advantages in the field of migration provided by entities within the United Nations system, wherever possible. The Advisory Committee, therefore, recommends that a reduction of 10 per cent in the amount of $16,900 be applied to the remaining proposed consultancy requirements (see also para. 10 below).

International Organization for Migration

9. Draft resolution A/71/L.58 reflects the agreement to bring IOM into a closer legal and working relationship with the United Nations as a related organization and underlines its role in jointly servicing the negotiations by extending the technical and policy expertise required, leading to the adoption of the global compact (A/71/L.58, preambular para. 3). In this connection, the Advisory Committee was informed that IOM would, inter alia: (a) provide substantive policy contributions to the background briefs for the six thematic sessions; (b) give direct policy and planning support to the regional consultations; (c) jointly service the negotiations together with the Secretariat of the United Nations; (d) work closely with other United Nations entities in developing a workplan for Member States in the relevant processes, mechanisms and initiatives in the field of migration; and (e) provide inputs to the zero draft of the global compact (see also A/71/L.58, paras. 11, 15, 22 and 26). The Advisory Committee was also informed that staff would be reassigned or seconded or loaned from IOM at a senior level as well as from other entities in the system to provide additional support.

10. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that a more in-depth explanation is required regarding the role of IOM in jointly servicing the negotiations, the nature of its contributions to the technical and policy expertise required and the staff resources to be provided. This information should be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.58 (see also para. 8 above).**

Conference facilities

11. The statement indicates that for ECA to examine regional and subregional aspects of international migration and to provide inputs, two discussions are to be held in Addis Ababa and one in Johannesburg, South Africa (A/C.5/71/19, para. 38). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the cost for renting premises in Johannesburg amounted to $23,500 (under miscellaneous services). **The Advisory Committee notes that, during its consideration of the issue, an insufficient explanation was provided as to the need for holding regional discussions away from United Nations premises.**

12. **As a matter of general principle, a full cost comparison should be undertaken and, in such cases, cost should be one factor under consideration, prior to deciding on the location(s) of meetings and related activities (see also A/71/811, para. 14). In this connection, the Advisory Committee reiterates its view that existing United Nations system facilities should be used, to the greatest extent possible, for such activities (ibid.). The Advisory Committee, therefore, recommends against the approval of the amount of $23,500 for the proposed rental of premises.**

13. The statement indicates that resources in the amount of $28,400 are required for the remodelling of a conference room in the United Nations Office at Vienna (A/C.5/71/19, para. 22 and table 1). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that remodelling of the M-Building conference rooms was required in preparation for the two-day high-level event and that the related services would be

provided by the Buildings Management Services of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. The Committee was also provided with related technical information and was informed that, following the conference, the rooms would be returned to their original set-up, thus incurring additional costs. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the costs entailed in reconfiguring the conference room facilities should be part of the regular servicing requirements provided for in the programme budget and, as such, the request for additional resources is not justified. The Advisory Committee recommends against the approval of the amount of $28,400 for the remodelling of conference facilities.**

Travel of staff and experts

14. The statement indicates that resources in the amount of $432,500 would be required for the travel of experts (see para. 3 above), including the amount of $114,000 required for the travel of experts to the various regional discussions. In addition, the resources include $263,200 for the travel of staff (ibid.), of which $15,000 is required for the travel of staff from the Office of the President of the General Assembly to support the informal thematic sessions to be held in Geneva and Vienna, and $7,600 and $22,300 for the travel of two conference officers to Vienna and Geneva respectively. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with a breakdown of these travel costs. The Committee noted a number of discrepancies in the costing information provided, the apparent inflation of airfare rates and the fact that the conference dates will be known well in advance, thereby allowing for savings arising from advance booking. As to the possible use of videoconferencing, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that in-person travel to the regional sessions and discussions would allow for greater depth and quality of the exchanges.

15. The Advisory Committee was also informed, upon enquiry, that the travel of two conference officers from the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division at Headquarters would be required to serve as the technical secretariat to the informal thematic sessions. The Committee was informed that the Division's presence is required to support the presiding officers and ensure that the meetings are held in accordance with General Assembly protocol and practices. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that these requirements should be met from within existing conference servicing capacities in Vienna and Geneva and, as such, is not convinced that this requirement necessitates the travel of two conference officers from New York to Vienna and Geneva. The Advisory Committee, therefore, recommends against the approval of the amount of $29,900.**

16. In addition, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Office of the President of the General Assembly is required to organize a series of informal thematic sessions, including three in Geneva, two in New York and one in Vienna, and will therefore require resources to cover the travel of staff to Geneva and Vienna to ensure preparations for the meetings and provide coordination and oversight on organizational issues and substantive inputs. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that travel of staff of the Office of the President of the General Assembly represents part of that Office's regular functions and, as such, should be covered from the resources provided to that office under the regular budget, and therefore recommends against the provision of $15,000.**

17. **As a general observation, the Advisory Committee is of the view that insufficient consideration has been given to the possibility of using videoconferencing, to the advance booking of tickets for pre-determined conference dates and to the possibility of combining trips, whenever possible, to keep the cost of travel requirements to a minimum, while ensuring the full**

implementation of mandated activities. The Committee also notes that some of the cost assumptions used in budgeting travel requirements may not have a sound basis, particularly in relation to staff travel. The Committee intends to keep this matter under review.

18. **The Advisory Committee, therefore, recommends that in addition to the reductions recommended above (see paras. 15 and 16) a reduction of 10 per cent in the amount of $43,300 should be applied to the proposed resource requirements for the travel of experts and a reduction of 15 per cent in the amount of $32,700 for the remaining proposed resource requirements for the travel of staff. The Committee therefore recommends approval of the remaining proposed travel requirements, amounting to $574,800.**

General temporary assistance

19. The statement indicates that resources are required in the amount of $53,800 for one general temporary assistance position at the P-4 level for three months in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (A/C.5/71/19, para. 57). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that apart from supporting the specific work of the Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, OHCHR has no regular budget resources devoted to issues related to migration and human rights and, as such, specific support is needed for preparing informal thematic sessions and background documentation, providing substantive input to the inter-agency issue brief and conducting a desk review of legal and policy issues relating to the human rights of migrants. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced that an additional position is needed given the nature of the support required and considers that this kind of research is intrinsic and connected to the overall mandate of OHCHR. The Advisory Committee, therefore, recommends against the approval of the general temporary assistance position at the P-4 level for three months in OHCHR. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

Coverage of the Economic Commission for Europe region

20. The statement indicates resource requirements for regional discussions on migration relating to four regional areas, not including the ECE region. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that pursuant to the draft resolution, ECE will organize discussions among the relevant Member States and other stakeholders to examine regional and subregional aspects of international migration and will capture inputs to provide to the preparatory process of the global compact. The Committee was also informed that ECE had examined this role and its current level of available resources under the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 and had determined that every effort would be made to absorb the related costs of such activities within existing resources. As a result, no related programme budget implications on the draft resolution were proposed for ECE. **The Advisory Committee requested, but was not provided with, information as to whether ECE will undertake activities similar to those of the other regional commissions. The Advisory Committee trusts that this information will be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the present report.**

III. Conclusion

21. **Subject to its comments and recommendations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should the Assembly adopt draft resolution A/71/L.58, an additional appropriation of $417,400 would be required under section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination; $160,200 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; $79,000 under section 9, Economic and social affairs; $54,000 under section 16, International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice; $97,100 under section 18, Economic and social development in Africa; $71,200 under section 19, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific; $48,300 under section 21, Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean; $52,000 under section 22, Economic and social development in Western Asia; and $8,400 under section 28, Public information, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, representing a charge against the contingency fund.**